

Remarks on New Year's Eve and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas

December 31, 2001

The President. First of all, I wish everybody a Happy New Year; 2002 is going to be a great year for America. And we will continue to pursue our mission in fighting terror. We'll work hard to make sure our economy rebounds. But most of all, the Nation will continue to embrace the culture of compassion, which really, really flourished right after September the 11th.

I'm looking forward to an early evening tonight. I guess at the age of 55, it's expected that—or it's okay for a guy to go to bed at about 9 p.m., maybe 10 p.m. So I don't plan anything glamorous for New Year's Eve.

I've got to tell you, there's nothing more relaxing than being in Crawford, Texas. I'm spending as much time outdoors as I can. I spent—after my briefing this morning with National Security Council, I was able to spend about 3 hours in the canyons, cleaning underbrush. And I feel refreshed and fortunate that we've got such a beautiful piece of land to live on.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions; then I'm going to go have a cheeseburger.

Usama bin Laden and Mullah Omar

Q. Any information on the whereabouts of bin Laden or Omar? Is there a new pursuit underway now?

The President. No. Yes, I mean, the same pursuit: We're going to get him, and it's just a matter of when. You know, you hear all kinds of reports and all kinds of rumors. You've got people saying he's in a cave, people saying he's dead, people saying he's in Pakistan. And all I know is that he's running, and any time you get a person running, it means you're going to get him pretty soon.

And same with Mullah Omar. It's just a matter of time, and I'm patient, and so is our military. There is no artificial timelines or, you know, deadlines. The definition of success is making sure the Taliban is out of existence, helping rebuild Afghanistan, and disrupting this international terrorist network. And we're doing a darn good job of it, too.

Situation in South Asia

Q. Sir, are tensions easing in India and Pakistan, now that Pakistan has arrested the leader of a militant group? And just one more.

The President. Sure.

Q. Would you urge President—or Prime Minister Vajpayee to meet with President Musharraf next week?

The President. Well, a couple of days ago I had a good talk with both Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf. I urged President Musharraf to do everything he could to crack down on the terrorist network that had bombed the Indian Parliament or raided the Indian Parliament. In my conversation with the Prime Minister, I said I can understand how he feels. If someone attacked the U.S. Capitol, I'd feel angry, too. I urged—however, I urged—I explained to the Indian Prime Minister that while I understood his anger, I was hoping that they were not headed for war. I said, "Give us all a chance to work with President Musharraf to bring the terrorists to justice."

And today, as you know, he apprehended the head of what they call LET. That's after he had apprehended the head of JEM. So he's cracking down hard, and I appreciate his efforts. Terror is terror, and the fact that the Pakistani President is after terrorists is a good sign.

Argentina

Q. Mr. President, with the middle class now rioting in Argentina, are you concerned that that country's economic crisis is developing into a real political crisis? And has the time come for the U.S. to do something more substantial—

The President. Well, I talked to President—interim President Saa, and no longer President Saa—and I'm, you know, obviously, I'm worried about it. Argentina is a very important part of our hemisphere. I've heard that they're thinking about expediting elections, and that will be good. And as soon as they can get—I'm confident the country will stay together until they get elections.

And once they elect a President, we'll work with him. But the future President has got to deal with the economic crisis at hand. And

once they come up with a plan that will sustain economic growth, then we're willing to work with them. We're willing to provide technical assistance to the Government, through the IMF, and hopefully, they'll get their house in order here pretty quickly.

Q. Still no need for more direct U.S. intervention or aid?

The President. I'm not sure what that means. You know, Argentina is a vibrant democracy; they've been around a long time; they have elections. You know, they're going to have elections here pretty quickly. As soon as they get a democratically elected President in place, we'll work with him as—as a matter of fact, I anticipate I'll be calling the person as soon as he wins.

Homeland Security

Q. What can Americans expect in the upcoming year, in terms of homeland security? What's next, sir?

The President. Well, what's next is really a focus on health, a focus on—in terms of making sure the public health systems work. We're reviewing all our visa policies. We're looking at our immigration policies. We're looking at border policies, both with Canada and with Mexico. And we'll continue doing what we're doing now, which is, any time we get a lead, we're going to disrupt—we're going to bring them in and give them a chance to protect Americans.

The FBI, the whole culture of the FBI has changed, for the better. The FBI's main task now is to protect Americans from further attack. The country is on alert. And a classic case was the person who tried to put the bomb in his shoe, and a flight attendant on the American flight alertly notified people, and they got it. And he's now—we're now giving him a chance to tell us what he knows about terror and about Al Qaida.

But 2002 will—the country will still be on alert; we'll still be working hard to protect the American people.

Q. Is there a special alert now? The terrorists have shown an inclination to strike around New Year's—

The President. Well, or Christmas. I mean, there's all kinds of excuses for them to attack. Let's just put it this way, that the administration and the Government has

not—is on alert and have been since 9/11. And the American people realize we have a new culture, and that is one of being vigilant. We've got people working overtime during the holidays; you know, we've got CAPs still flying around. Anybody tries to harm an American, there's a good chance we're going to get him.

Vision for 2002

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—for the American people?*

The President. Well, it is that we're a blessed nation. God has richly blessed America. And for that, we ought to be grateful. We're a nation that has gone through incredible suffering and hardship. Yet, as a result of it, we're a strong nation and a united nation. And 2002, in my judgment, is going to be a great year.

It's going to be a great year because people are going to be able to find work again. It's going to be a great year because our military is going to do the job the Americans expect. It'll be a great year because at home we'll protect the American people. And it's going to be a great year primarily because Americans have taken a look inward, reassessed their values, have realized that some of the basics in life are that which is most important: love of faith, love of family. And as a result, our communities have been stronger. So I'm really looking forward to 2002.

I'm also looking forward to my cheeseburger. [*Laughter*]

New Year's Resolutions

Q. Any resolutions?

The President. Resolutions? Eat fewer cheeseburgers. [*Laughter*]

Thank you all.

New Year's Eve Plans

Q. Do you have friends coming over tonight?

The President. Yes, we've got two couples from Austin and a couple from Lubbock. And the Lubbock couple are generally—has spent, I guess, New Year's Eve with us for, like, a decade now, I think. And that's it.

Have fun; enjoy yourselves. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:44 p.m. at the Coffee Station restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida

terrorist organization; Mullah Mohammed Omar, former head of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan; Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, head of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LET); Maulana Masood Azhar, head of the terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM); former interim President Adolfo Rodríguez Saa of Argentina; and Richard C. Reid, a passenger on American Airlines Flight AA63 who allegedly tried to ignite an explosive device in his shoe while en route from Paris to Miami on December 22. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Digital Computer Exports

December 28, 2001

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105–85), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of Public Law 105–85. The new level will be 190,000 millions of theoretical operations per second (MTOPS). In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(e), I hereby notify you of my decision to remove Latvia from the list of countries covered under section 1211(b). The attached report provides the rationale supporting these decisions and fulfills the requirements of Public Law 105–85, sections 1211(d) and (e).

I have made these changes based on the recommendation of the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Energy.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Carl Levin, chairman, and John W. Warner, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; Bob Stump, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Paul Sarbanes, chairman, and Phil Gramm, ranking member, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. This letter was re-

leased by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 2, 2002.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans

December 28, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month report on the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 3, 2002.

Notice—Continuation of Libya Emergency

January 3, 2002

On January 7, 1986, by Executive Order 12543, President Reagan declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Libya. On January 8, 1986, by Executive Order 12544, the President took additional measures to block Libyan assets in the United States. The President has transmitted a notice continuing this emergency to the Congress and the *Federal Register* every year since 1986.

The crisis between the United States and Libya that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 7, 1986, has not been resolved. Despite the United Nations Security Council's suspension of U.N. sanctions against Libya upon the Libyan government's